

We thank the Education Committee for have this hearing on HR 4 and SR 4. The Comprehensive School Choice Plan (CCP) will continue the over 30-year struggle to bring quality integrated education to Hartford and suburban students. The funding of this negotiated plan will take further steps to bring more equity and fairness to the education system.

Our two daughters where original plaintiffs in the Sheff vs O'Neil school desegregation law suit. We never imagined that 30 years later we would still be seeking racial and economic justice in education. Our daughters are grown and doing well. We are sad and sickened to think of the thousands of children that did not have the opportunity of an quality integrated education because of the lack of political will of our state legislature.

Here we live in one of the richest states in America and allow Hartford and other communities to linger in poverty without addressing the basic human needs of all of our children. Fully funding the current mutual agreement between the Sheff plaintiffs and the State of Connecticut will take an important step to helping thousands of our youth to achiever their educational goals.

At the end of the agreement our lawsuit with also end. We hope we all will be able to celebrate that Connecticut did the right thing. We moved forward to creating a better Connecticut and see all children, regardless of their zip code, have an equal opportunity.

Dr. King noted in his last book before he was assassinated that "Racism can well be that cohesive evil that will bring down the curtain on Western civilization... If Western civilization does not now respond constructively to the challenge to banish racism, some future historian will have to say that the great civilization died because it lacked the soul and commitment to make justice reality for all.." [Where Do We go From Here: Chaos or Community 1968]

Let's all work together to make us proud of a Connecticut where all students receive a quality-integrated education.

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